

PROCEEDINGS OF THE HISTORIC CONSERVATION BOARD

MONDAY, December 9, 2002

3:00 P.M., J. MARTIN GRIESEL ROOM, CENTENNIAL PLAZA II

The Historic Conservation Board met at 3:00 P.M., in the J. Martin Griesel Room, Centennial Plaza II, with members Borys, Kreider, Raser, Senhauser, Spraul-Schmidt, Sullebarger, and Wallace present. Absent: Bloomfield and Clement

MINUTES

The minutes of the Monday, November 25, 2002 meeting were approved (motion by Raser, second by Borys).

CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS, 327-345 WEST FOURTH STREET, WEST FOURTH STREET HISTORIC DISTRICT

Staff member Caroline Kellam presented the staff report on this request for a Certificate of Appropriateness for the rehabilitation of the buildings at 327-345 West Fourth Street for mixed use residential with commercial on the first floor. The one-story building at 327 West Fourth Street is a non-contributing building within the West Fourth Street Historic District; the remaining four buildings are contributing buildings within the district.

Ms. Kellam stated that overall the proposed rehabilitation meets the guidelines for the district; most work is repair and replacement to match the original. Work includes installing a new storefront at 327 West Fourth Street and restoring the remaining storefronts, window replacements and interior and exterior rehabilitation. The project also calls for new window openings on the east side elevation of 331 West Fourth Street; twenty-four openings were cut without a building permit. In conducting its review for Tax Act certification, the Ohio Historic Preservation Office (OHPO) has determined that twenty-four new window openings are excessive and that nine of those new opening will have to be filled. Ms. Kellam said the local district guidelines stipulate that the proportion of glass to wall should be sympathetic to the existing. She said staff concurs with the OHPO that nine windows should be infilled and that the entire wall should be painted a color to match the existing brick.

In answer to Ms. Sullebarger, Ms. Kellam confirmed that the Board would be acting on all three buildings at this time including the installation of new 1/1 double hung windows in all buildings. Ms. Sullebarger was concerned that the historic photograph included in the staff report shows only 331-335 West Fourth (the Kinsey Building). Applicant/owner/developer Tim Voss indicated that the existing windows in 345 West Fourth Street would remain unchanged.

In response to Mr. Raser, Mr. Voss stated that he was willing to close the nine windows as suggested by the OHPO in order to receive the historic tax credits. He explained that the photograph included in the staff report had been digitally altered to show how the east elevation window openings would appear once the nine openings are closed. Mr. Voss agreed with Mr. Kreider that the existing glass block in several windows on the rear elevation of the Kinsey building is not appropriate and that he would work with staff on how the openings would be modified.

[Ms. Wallace entered the meeting]

BOARD ACTION

The Board voted unanimously (motion by Raser, second by Spraul-Schmidt) to approve a Certificate of Appropriateness for the rehabilitation of 327-345 West Fourth Street with the following conditions:

1. Nine of the twenty-four new window openings on the east side elevation of 331 West Fourth Street be infilled to match the original condition and the entire wall be painted a uniform brick color; and
2. Final plans for this project including elevations of the east side elevation of 331 West Fourth Street be reviewed and approved by the Urban Conservator prior to issuing a Certificate of Appropriateness and a building permit.

CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS, 57 MULBERRY STREET, OVER-THE-RHINE (NORTH) HISTORIC DISTRICT

Staff member Adrienne Cowden presented the staff report for this request for a Certificate of Appropriateness for a rear addition to a residence at 57 Mulberry Street. It is a contributing resource within the Over-the-Rhine (North) Historic District.

Ms. Cowden described the residence as a c. 1880 three-story brick Italianate which has undergone a number of alterations, including a brick and frame rooftop addition. The rear elevation has an existing two-story brick ell with first floor and roof-top decks.

The applicant proposes to add a third floor family room and an overhanging fourth floor master bedroom to the ell and a fifth floor studio loft to the main house. The exterior walls of these additions will be principally glass. The second floor deck would be expanded and a matching new deck added to the third floor; a third observation deck would be built atop the master bedroom. Ms. Cowden explained that the new construction has been designed to both add living area and maximize views. Because of its hillside location, only a small portion of the side elevations are visible from Mulberry Street; the rear elevation is visible only from Findlay Market's parking lot, five blocks (approximately a quarter mile) away. Ms. Cowden explained that the historic district guidelines allow for additions that do not overpower the original building and that many penthouse additions and decks have been built in the neighborhood.

A pre-hearing was held on December 3, 2002. The applicants/owners Christopher and Florence Rose and abutting neighbors to the east and west were in attendance. Ms. Lynne Wu and Mr. Rob Gibson of 55 Mulberry Street were concerned that the proposed loft deck will overlook their third floor bedroom skylights and the lower additions will obstruct their views. Ms. Leah Cohen of 59 Mulberry Street was also concerned about obstructed views and about safety if she were to allow construction access through her rear yard. The parties have been in meetings to resolve these issues.

Ms. Cowden stated that the addition generally meets the historic conservation guidelines with the exception of the cultured stone proposed for the second story rear elevation, which is an inappropriate finish material. The applicant is agreeable to selecting an alternative finish material.

Owner Christopher Rose was in attendance to respond to questions from the Board. In response to Mr. Krieder, Mr. Rose stated that the two chimneys on the east

elevation are existing; the rear one would be raised approximately 5'. Responding to Mr. Raser, Ms. Cowden stated that the owner had considered resolving the privacy issue by screening (with a trellis or plantings), but staff thought such a treatment would only increase the already substantial massing of the proposed addition. Ms. Cowden verified for Mr. Senhauser that there are no zoning variances being requested. Mr. Senhauser pointed out that accessing the adjacent property to construct and issues of privacy are not within the Board's purview, although they are valid issues.

In response to Ms. Borys, Ms. Cowden explained that although the residence is on a hillside, it is not within a hillside environmental quality district. Ms. Sullebarger observed that in the past, the Board's major concern was the view from the street, but more recently the Board had considered visual impact from below and at greater distances for hillside properties. After discussion, the Board concluded that the addition would be 3' deeper and 7-½ feet wider than the existing building. Ms. Borys said she was more concerned with the mass and form of the addition as it wrapped around the corner of the ell than with its height.

Mr. Senhauser questioned whether the Building and Inspections Department (B&I) would approved the project, since the loft addition would create a four-story dwelling and has no means of egress. Mr. Senhauser acknowledged that the building may be considered to be 2-½ stories according to the Zoning Code, but under the Building Code, it would be considered a four-story building; therefore, the studio loft may not be permitted. He agreed with Ms. Borys that one of the biggest objections is with the aggressive nature of the addition and the ballooning out of the upper master bedroom space, which may not even be allowed. The Board discussed tabling the Item until B&I had reviewed the application under the building code, since the overall mass of the structure could change substantially. Mr. Rose stated that he had already heard from the B&I plans examiner requesting an energy summary, additional information on the spiral staircase and ventless fireplace and changes on the third floor plan to eliminate the bedroom through a bathroom. No mention was made of the studio loft addition or related egress issues.

Ms. Leah Cohen of 59 Mulberry Street stated her concern regarded construction accessing through her property. She stated she was concerned that she would be held liable if her deteriorated wooden stairs were to collapse or if contractors might need access from her roof to work on Mr. Rose's chimney. Mr. Kreider stated that the Board's approval does not give the applicants approval to use her property and that she can condition the use of her property in any way that she wants. Mr. Kreider suggested she have the contractor provide her with a certificate of insurance and a Hold Harmless and Indemnification Agreement, but that these are legal matters that she should work out with her attorney and the applicants.

BOARD ACTION

The Board voted (motion by Kreider, second by Raser) to approve a Certificate of Appropriateness with the following conditions:

1. The cultured stone depicted on the second story rear elevation shall be removed from the plans and a more appropriate material be substituted;
2. If there are substantial changes to the footprint of the building additions, decks, or elevations, the changes will be reviewed by the Historic Conservation Board; and

3. Final construction drawings with the proposed exterior finishes be submitted to the Urban Conservator for approval prior to construction.

CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS, 1761 SYCAMORE STREET, OVER-THE-RHINE (NORTH) HISTORIC DISTRICT

Urban Conservator William Forwood presented the staff report for a Certificate of Appropriateness for the rehabilitation of the structure at 1761 Sycamore Street, a contributing building in the Over-the-Rhine (North) Historic District that has been vacant for a number of years.

The applicants/owners propose to rehab the three-story building as a multi-family residence. Mr. Forwood explained that the east (front) elevation would be renovated to its historical appearance, except that the stuccoed gable end of a new fourth floor roof would be visible above.

Substantial changes are proposed for the side (south) elevation. Basement openings will be infilled with glass block; a first floor window will be converted to a door; and on the third floor, three windows will be converted to doors (with balconies) and a new window added. The half wall of the third floor will be extended to full height; existing eyebrow windows will be infilled or converted into full height windows or triple atrium doors. The atrium doors serve two curved iron balconies; each cantilevers 8' from the south wall, creating a precariously overbalanced effect. The new roof alters the roofline of the original structure; however, it does not extend in height above the primary roofs in the district.

Mr. Forwood said that all of the substantial changes are proposed for the side elevation, which typically is not as highly visible as it is in this location. He added that the owner has title to the abutting property so there are no issues of setbacks. He stated that a number of the changes conflict with the historic guidelines including the balconies, glass block, stucco, and the atrium doors (since the guidelines generally discourage paired openings). However, considering that the building has been sitting empty and is in a location where views are a marketing element for rehab, staff is recommending approving a Certificate of Appropriateness with the condition that an alternative material be found for the synthetic stucco and that the fourth floor balconies are reduced in depth.

Mr. Forwood stated that the Mt. Auburn Community Council was notified and a pre-hearing was held. Staff received no objection and no one attended the pre-hearing conference.

Architect Alice M. Emmons was present to respond to questions from the Board. She stated that the reason for the addition of the triple-wide atrium doors was for additional natural light and a panoramic view for the loft, which would not be achievable with fewer, narrower openings. Ms. Emmons confirmed that the third floor wall extension would be of unpainted salvaged brick to match the existing. She explained that stucco will be used only on the east gable and was open to alternative lightweight materials. The Board discussed alternatives including thin brick, wood siding, and sheet metal, but concluded that a sand-finish cement plaster painted or stained to match the brick was the best alternative.

Ms. Emmons said she understood the concern of staff that the balconies were large; however, she sought to reduce their mass by constructing them of wrought iron painted black. She said that the 4-½ foot depth suggested would not accommodate

a table and chairs. Ms. Borys asked whether the balconies could be redesigned as a superimposed porch with the additional porches on the second level. Ms. Emmons responded that such a change would require a very substantial column to grade and that she did not want to bear on the existing brick wall. Ms. Emmons agreed with Ms. Sullebarger who suggested that the balconies could be four feet at the corners, bowing to 6 feet at the center.

Ms. Sullebarger was concerned with the amount of change to the south elevation - that there were significant changes to the original fabric, the roofline and fenestration. She also questioned the use of glass block in the basement openings. Ms. Borys suggested that the glass block should be replaced with another material to be approved by the Urban Conservator.

BOARD ACTION

The Board voted (motion by Borys, second by Raser), Sullebarger opposing, to take the following actions:

1. Find that the application generally meets the guidelines of the Over-the-Rhine (North) Historic District in materials and massing;
2. Find that several elements of the proposed design do not conform to the guidelines including the third floor balconies, glass block, synthetic stucco, and atrium doors; and
3. Approve a Certificate of Appropriateness for the rehabilitation of 1761 Sycamore Street, subject to final review by the Urban Conservator, provided that:
 - a. Synthetic stucco is replaced with cement plaster, painted or stained to match the existing brick;
 - b. The third floor balconies are reduced in depth to no more than 4' at the corners, bowing to no more than 6' at the center; and
 - c. Glass block be replaced with another material more appropriate to the district to be approved by the Urban Conservator.

CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS AND ZONING VARIANCE, 2015 FREEMAN AVENUE, DAYTON STREET HISTORIC DISTRICT

Mr. Raser recused himself from participation in the decision of this Item due to potential conflicts of interest.

Staff member Caroline Kellam presented the staff report for a Certificate of Appropriateness and zoning variance for the installation of a building identification and bulletin board style sign to be installed at Heberle Elementary School, located at 2015 Freeman Avenue. The school is a contributing resource within the Dayton Street Historic District, Areas B and C.

Ms. Kellam indicated the proposed sign would be 8' wide and 4' tall and framed in a black metal box. The sign will read "Heberle ELEMENTARY SCHOOL" in a banner above; the space below will be for changeable messages in black letters against a white plastic background. The internally illuminated sign is to be located on the north end of the Freeman Avenue (front) façade, above the first floor windows of a limestone polygonal bay.

Ms. Kellam stated that the proposed sign requires zoning variances for size and internal illumination. Signs in this R-7 multi-family, high-density zoning district should may not exceed 12 square feet and are not permitted to be internally illuminated. Ms. Kellam explained that the applicant believes an internally-illuminated sign is necessary since some activities at the school may be held as late as 9:00 p.m. Ms. Kellam said that the district guidelines are less specific, but state that signs should be designed to be compatible and in harmony with the architectural style, scale and character of the existing structures.

She stated that staff feels that the sign is in scale with this large building, but believes that its location on the limestone wall is not appropriate. Ms. Kellam explained that staff has encouraged the applicant to consider a freestanding sign or relocating the sign to a better location on the building. The applicant has indicated he would consider an alternative location; however, he is concerned that a freestanding sign could be easily vandalized.

A pre-hearing was held. Norman Kattelman, representing the Dayton Street Neighborhood Association, attended the hearing expressing concern regarding the location of the sign.

Applicant Cliff Meyer of ABC Signs was present to respond to questions from the Board. He explained that Ms. King, the school principal, feels the sign would be vandalized if it were at street level. In addition, it would cost approximately \$13,000 for a freestanding internally illuminated sign in comparison to the \$4,000 sign proposed.

[Mr. Kreider left the meeting]

Ms. Sullebarger stated that many schools have freestanding signs that can be easily read from the street. She added that no one is challenging the school's need for a sign, but questioned if vandalism should be a concern. Mr. Meyer responded that the cost to put a freestanding sign by the street would be an additional \$1500 - \$2000 for the frame, locking and hinges. Ms. Wallace noted that Bond Hill has a freestanding sign, which seems to have no problem with vandalism. She added that a positive aspect of a freestanding sign is that children can be involved in changing the lettering. Ms. Spraul Schmidt pointed out that not all of the freestanding signs at schools are illuminated and suggested if cost was a factor, a freestanding sign could be used that was not internally lighted. In response to Ms. Sullebarger, Mr. Meyer stated that streetlights at the corner of Dayton and Freeman or Bank and Freeman could possibly provide additional light in the area.

Mr. Kattelman, Vice President of the Dayton Street Neighborhood Association, stated that the Association objected to the lighted sign, as well as to the location on the building. They felt that a freestanding sign located at Bank and Freeman would be not only more appropriately located, but more visible. Further, he said the Association prefers the sign to be covered to protect the letters from being blown away in high winds. The Association also suggested the school consider applying for a grant to underwrite the cost for a more acceptable sign and that it was willing to assist the school in an application.

Ms. Sullebarger questioned whether a freestanding was comparable in cost to an illuminated wall sign. Mr. Meyer responded that the additional cost for illumination is approximately \$1500 - \$2000. He reiterated that the additional cost for a case, including hinges and locks is approximately \$1200. Ms. Sullebarger suggested that a

non-illuminated, freestanding sign would have the least amount of impact on the building and the district.

BOARD ACTION

The Board voted unanimously (motion by Sullebarger, second by Spraul-Schmidt, Raser recused) to take the following actions:

1. Grant a variance to Section 1473-301(b)(4) to permit the installation of a sign at 2015 Freeman Avenue with the following conditions:
 - a. The sign shall be a freestanding sign;
 - b. The sign may not be internally illuminated;
 - c. The size of the sign shall not exceed 32 square feet; and
 - d. Final plans for the design and location must be reviewed and approved by the Urban Conservator prior to issuing a Certificate of Appropriateness and building permit; and
2. Find that such relief from the literal implication of the Zoning Code:
 - a. Is necessary and appropriate in the interest of historic conservation so as not to adversely affect the historic architectural or aesthetic integrity of the district; and
 - c. Will not be materially detrimental to the public health, safety, and welfare or injurious to the property in the district or vicinity where the property is located.

ADJOURNMENT

As there were no other items for consideration by the Board, the meeting adjourned.

William L. Forwood
Urban Conservator

John C. Senhauser
Chairman

Date